nature net

The NatureKenya Newsletter www.naturekenya.org March 05

TALKS & VIDEOS

Winged Migration (Rescheduled)

Wed. 9 March 2:30 p.m. & Mon. 14 March 05 5:30 p.m.

***Tickets for the February 14 show will be honoured - so* please bring your tickets or receipt! Please let others know that this film is being shown again!**

Louis Leakey Hall, Nairobi Museum
Tickets @ 300/-
A BIG THANK YOU to KWAL for providing some of the wine

SUCCULENTA PLANT SALE

Kenton College
Saturday 2 April 05

Succulento joins the Kenya Horticultural Society for their Plant Sale, at Kenton College, Kileleshwa, starting 10:00 a.m. Please stort preparing and bagging plants now and remember to reserve /space with Sue Allon (890375)

MARCH AT A GLIMPSE

Sat 5	ASF Birdwolks & NRF walk & trip to Mogadi
Wed 9	Winged Migration
Sat 12	Tree Wolk & FONA AGM
Mon 14	Winged Migration
Sat 19	Basic Botany
Sun 20	Sunday Birdwalk
Wed 23	Intro to Turtles & Crocs

Birdwolks every Wednesday Morning
Bird ringing every Thursdoy Morning

Editorial Team

Editor Catherine Ngarachu
Evening Skies Fleur Ng'weno
Naturalist's Corner Dino Martins

IN HOUSE

Annual General Meeting
of the Friends of Nairobi Arboretum

Saturday 12 March 05 at 11:00 a.m.
at the Old Forester s House, Nairobi Arboretum

IN THE FIELD

Herpetofauna activities

Trip to Lake Magadi
5 March 2005

Inhouse training:
Introduction to conservation of Turtles and Crocodiles
23 March 2005

To participate contact the Dept. of Herpetology, Nairobi Museum, tel 3742161 - 4 ext 244 or 245
Participants who are not Nature Kenya or Kenya Herpetofauna Working Group members pay 100/-

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Free camping at

L. Elementaita

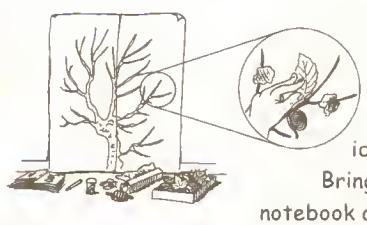
Fri 25 - Mon 28 Mar 05

FLAMINGO CAMP on Lake Elementaita has offered free camping to Nature Kenya members during the Easter holidays. There is lots of birding to be done and other nature excursions on offer!

Take your camping gear and food - however it is also possible to order food and drinks at the camp.

Proof of membership required!
to book call 0722 832001
MANY THANKS TO FLAMINGO CAMP

Basic Botany for Beginners
with Ann Birnie



Sat 19 March 05
Nairobi Arboretum
9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

1/2 day course on plant life and identification.
Bring pen and notebook and ony tree or plont book.
Book with 600/-, in odvance, at the Noture Kenya front office. Minimum 15 pox

action

Action needed
to save L. Naivasha from devastating effects

by **Don Turner**

Naivasha has long been regarded as a jewel within the chain of Rift Valley lakes. The lake has been recognized as a major wintering ground for many thousands of migratory duck and shorebirds. It has also been a major breeding ground for many local waterbird species, while the adjacent grasslands were a vital refuge for many species of bustard, coursers, plovers, larks, pipits, longclaws, cisticolas and widowbirds. The introduction of fish to the lake in the late 1920's brought about a boom in fishing activities, while the Fish Eagle population increased from one pair to up to 100 individuals.

However over the past forty years man has unwittingly created a situation whereby today the lake and its surrounding grasslands are being slowly subjected to a slow and painful death. It all started when three alien species (the Coypu or Nutria, Louisiana Crayfish and the deadly Salvinia weed) found their way into the lake in the 1960's. They established themselves with devastating effects on the lake's aquatic vegetation, and as with so many introduced species they thrived and multiplied rapidly. The extensive areas of lily pads that fringed the lakeshore almost entirely disappeared. Commercial fishing and the indiscriminate use of gill nets resulted in a dramatic decline in numbers of Great Crested Grebes, Long-tailed Cormorants, African Darters, White-backed Ducks, Purple Swamphen and Red-knobbed Coots. Meanwhile a number of *Agapornis* lovebirds were released into the wild, and within a few years rapidly attained pest status. Their numbers rose to over 10,000 individuals, with many local hole nesting birds, particularly Red-fronted Barbets being deprived of suitable breeding sites. At the same time the horticulture industry, which employs in excess of 25,000 workers, covered large tracts of grassland in plastic greenhouses. It was only a matter of time before the Fish Eagle population showed signs of decreasing due to the presence of toxic wastes finding their way into the food chain.

In 1995 the Kenya Government declared Naivasha a Ramsar Site, like Lake Nakuru, becoming Kenya's second wetland of international importance. It was hoped that this would be Naivasha's salvation and it might regain some of its former glory. Sadly this was not the case, and today Lake Naivasha is one of the most polluted lakes in the country. Similarly grasslands around the lake have been severely eroded ond bustard, courser, lark, pipit, cisticola and widowbird populations have decreased dramoticolly due to loss and degradation of their habitat.

What can be done and what has to be done? Clearly something **must** be done to save Naivasha from sinking into obscurity. Surely we owe it to future generations. The horticulture industry is a major player in the economy of the country, so too is tourism. Naivasha could have both, but sadly at the moment it does not.

Tourism is a government regulated industry, horticulture does not seem to be. With careful planning both industries could operate alongside each other for the benefit of everyone.

Recently the Kenya Government adopted a Lake Naivasha Management Plan, which was gazetted in 2004. This plan caters for all stakeholders in the Naivasha area. It must be allowed to work, and the Government has a duty to see that it works. The uncontrolled destruction and degradation of a Ramsar site and an Important Bird Area must not be allowed to continue.

Nature Kenya can and must play a supporting role in conservation and education. Children in Naivasha schools today are the future civic and political leaders of tomorrow. Now is the time to target the schools and local community, and conservation education can play its part. The current situation at Naivasha is surely a wake-up call to everyone interested in returning Naivasha to its former glory. Let us hope that 2005 will see the start of the Naivasha renaissance.

Wild animals for Thai zoos

Since it was reported in the 24 January issue of the *East African* (www.nationmedia.com/eastafrican/24012005/index.html), the proposed export of wild animals by the government to Thailand has generated much controversy.

For more information please contact Youth for Conservation tel 606479/8 or visit their website www.youthforconservation.org

Prefab building
provides much needed extra space!

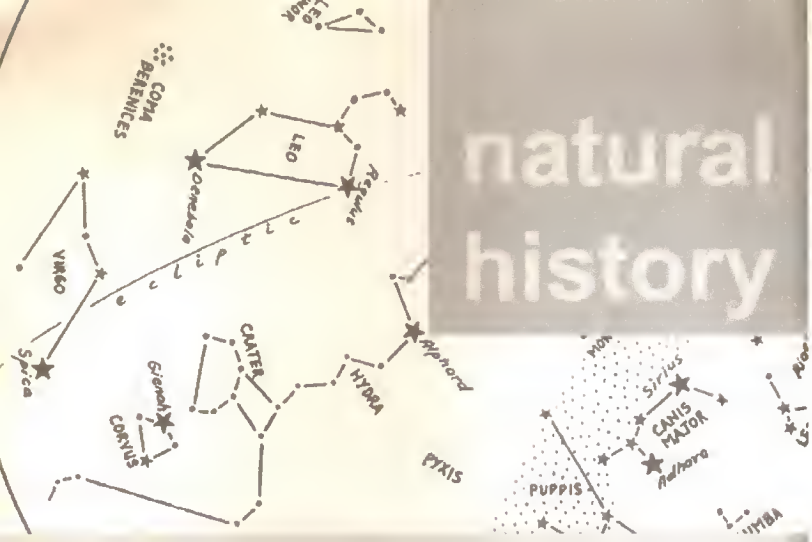
Opposite the Kikuyu homestead, on the Nairobi Museum campus is a secondhand prefab building, which will be the location for a new Nature Kenya membership shop and subscription office. The building is standing tall and beautiful, but many items are needed to make it functional. This includes shelving for shop displays and storage, surrounding area landscaping, networking for better communication, chairs & office desk, toilet and water facilities and lots of other items like extension cables, phone sets, file cabinet, plants etc

Can you help?

Can you help?

If you are able to help and support Nature Kenya In any way, please get in touch with the Membership Marketing Officer at office@naturekenya.org

Prefab building donated, with many thanks, by the World Food Programme, Somalia Office with the kind facilitation of the Economic Housing Group.



EVENING SKY

By Jan [illegible]

Moon times and Planets relative to the Moon

March 3 **Last quarter Moon**; March 6 Mars just north of our moon (morning sky); March 11 Mercury is almost at its highest and close to the moon; March 17 **First quarter Moon** March 19 Saturn is overhead near the Moon; March 25 **Full Moon** (Jupiter is close by the Moon for 2 or 3 days)

Sun

The sun, which has been in the south, is now passing over the equator. The equinox is on March 20th, marking the start of autumn in the southern hemisphere, and spring in the northern hemisphere. For the next six months the sun will be in the north.

Stars

Bright March stars include Sirius, the brightest star, high in the south, almost overhead; Canopus, the second brightest star, below Sirius in the south; and Procyon above Sirius, almost overhead.

The constellation Crux, the Southern Cross, is rising in the southeast. The cross shape seems to be lying on its side, the lowest star pointing to the south. The Plough or Big Dipper is rising in the northeast. Above the Plough, high in the northeastern sky, is the constellation Leo the Lion.

The constellations of Orion and Auriga are still high in the western sky, followed by Gemini, the twins. Look for two bright stars near each other, high in the northwestern sky. A third light nearby, bright but not sparkling, is the planet Saturn.

Betelgeuse, the orange star in Orion, is high overhead, a little to the west. This beautiful star is huge. Red stars like this one are most often tremendously huge; this star would fill all the space from Saturn to our sun! In order to maintain such a size the star runs at a relatively low temperature, the range being possibly around 5,000,000 C in the centre and 2,000 C at the edge, (hence the red colour). The density of the gasses is low and the fusion reactions in the core are only barely maintained at this slow pace.

Planets. 05

Saturn can be seen high overhead, near the two bright stars of the constellation Gemini. Mercury is low in the western sky for the first 3 weeks of the month reaching the greatest elongation on the 12th. At the end of the month it passes between the earth and the sun, while Venus is on the other side of the sun.

Bright Jupiter rises late in the evening, and can be seen in the western sky in the morning before dawn. Mars, rising later, is higher in the morning sky.

Special offer to Nature Kenya members

20% off at the Driftwood Beachclub

Nature Kenya members can stay at the Driftwood in Malindi, on presentation of their membership card, and get 20% discount (if paying by cash or cheque). The Driftwood is a charming beachfront property with great food and service.

Contact Driftwood Beachclub <driftwood@swiftmalindi.com> or tel 042 20155

City Park Greeting Cards

Featuring a beautiful painting of the band stand by Mary Collis. Available from the Nature Kenya front office @ 50/- each (blank on inside)

CLASSIFIEDS

Reach over 1000 members by advertising in Nature Net

Rates for Classifieds: • Up to 25 words 250/- • Up to 50 words 500/- Ads • 1/4 page @ 1750/- • 1/2 page @ 3000/- • with image +500/-

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carole@access350.co.ke
OR JOANNA TRENCH 0733 603839
refarest@africaonline.co.ke

Up and about

DECLARATION

Nature Kenya does not accept any responsibility whatsoever in respect of negligence of any of its staff, volunteers or members organising the outings/trips or for any loss, injury, death or damage to property.

BIRD RINGING

Meet at the Museums' Nairobi Botanic Garden, at 7:00 a.m. every Thursday.

Ngong Road Forest Walks (Nairobi)

Organised by the Ngong Road Forest Sanctuary Trust, nature walks are held on the first and third Saturdays of the month i.e. **5 & 19 March, at 9:00 a.m.** Meet at the stairs leading to the Restaurant at the Racecourse. Call Tony Chalo to confirm on 575207 or 0733 712406.

WEDNESDAY MORNING BIRDWALKS

Bird watching walks at sites in and around Nairobi. Meet at the National Museum car park every Wednesday at 8:45 a.m. Return about 12:30 p.m. *Those who are not members can get temporary membership at Ksh 100 per birdwalk, payable on arrival at the car park.*

SUNDAY BIRDWATCH

Members meet at the National Museum, Nairobi car park at 9:00 a.m. the third Sunday of every month, **i.e. 20 March**. The members decide where to go. Bring lunch

TREE WALKS

Guided tree walks in the Arboretum on the second Saturday i.e. **12 March from 9:30 a.m.** Meet at the Arboretum gate. *Those who are not members of FONA or Nature Kenya pay Ksh 100/- fee on arrival at the gate. (No tree walk on public holiday)*

ARABUKO-SOKOKE (COAST)

The Saturday birdwatch with the Arabuko Sokoke Forest Guides Association is on the first Saturday of each month i.e. **5 March, at 6:30 a.m.** from the Visitor Centre, Gede. Cost 100/- per person. KWS fees now apply (100/- Citizens, 500/- Residents)

Lake Victoria Sunset Birders (Kisumu)

The Lake Victoria Sunset Birders are a Nature Kenya Site Support Group and organise bird walks at sites in and around Kisumu every Friday of the month. For further details call 057 42952 or 0734 994938 or email lakevictoriasunsetbirders@yahoo.co.uk

Mt Kenya Biodiversity Conservation Group (MKBCG)

The MKBCG are a Nature Kenya Site Support Group and organise bird walks to sites around Naro Moru every last Saturday of the month **i.e. 26 March**. For more information contact 0722 364904, 0733 937115 or 062 62071 Email: mt_kebio@yahoo.co.uk

FFJ Bird Walk (Coast)

Friends of Fort Jesus birdwalks are held the third Saturday of each month, **i.e. 19 March.** Please call Marlene Reid on (041) 491 648 to confirm

Plan your weekend or other break to stay at the

Kinangop Guest House

Perched on the Kinangop Plateau with incredible views across the Rift Valley, the farm combines tussock-grass pasture, indigenous forest, and attractive gardens. The guesthouse is comfortable and fully furnished. Visitors can enjoy hikes and walks on the farm or go further afield with local guides.

For more information, brochure and non-member rates please contact Nature Kenya.

Guest House rates: Day visit 350/-

MEMBER nos	Overnight	Weekend
1 to 2 pax	4000/-	6500/-
3	4,900/-	7,400/-
4	5,800/-	8,300/-

NatureKenya

Yes! ☐ *Start* ☐ *Renew*

my Nature Kenya membership

MAILING ADDRESS (BLOCK LETTERS)

Surname .....

First Name ..... Ms/Mr/Title .....

Address .....

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(**OPTIONAL** - but useful to us in planning)

Occupation .....

Age Bracket (tick) under 21( ) 21-35( ) 36-50( ) over 50( )

Country of Origin .....

Would you like us to share your contacts Yes/ NO

For Official Use Only Sub No. Recpt. No.

Mode Due Date Recpt Date

MEMBERSHIP TYPE	Ksh Per Year	Enter Amount
Full	1000	
Sponsor	**3000**	
Family	1400	
Pensioners	400	
Students (Full time & undergraduate)	400	
Institutional (Libraries, schools, clubs)	1000	
Corporate	10000	
Corporate Plus	20000	
ADDITIONAL SUBSCRIPTIONS		
Kenya Birds **(tick to receive this free Bird magazine)**		
Journal of E.A. Natural History	1000	
Scopus (Ornithological Journal)	500	
World Birdwatch (the BirdLife International magazine)	1500	
Succulenta East Africa	400	
Friends of Nairobi Arboretum		
Single - 400/-, Student - 250/-, School or Club - 800/-		
DONATIONS *Help us to do even more!* 5000/ 8000/ Other		
Total		

If you live reside outside of Kenya please refer to www.naturekenya.org